



Leadership Tips *June-July* **2018:** **Watch** **Your Language**

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Watch Your Language: *Enhance Your Credibility and Trust* *Through Better Spoken Language Skills*



Even though there appears to be an acceptance of misspelling in tweets and emails, it's still important to have your spoken words reflect your professionalism.

Whether you're a job-seeker, an employee seeking a raise, a first-time supervisor or professional simply seeking to impress others in meetings, know that your use of language matters.

You undermine your candidacy for hire, promotion or publication when you're loose with language skills and make inappropriate word choices in prepared presentations and impromptu remarks.

Grammar-Time

Review the three sentences below. Can you identify which ones are grammatically correct?

1. Me and Sam went to the store today.
2. I did good on my exam Friday.
3. Each of the above sentences are examples of bad English.

All three break basic grammar rules. Corrected, they read as follows:

1. Sam and I went to the store today.
2. I did well on my exam Friday.
3. Each of the above sentences is an example of bad English.

Professionals at all levels can be undone by sloppy spoken (and written) language in their verbal reports, speeches and other communications. In the workplace, advancement is unlikely if your command of the English language is less than solid. Professionalism counts. Standard English shows good taste, good schooling and an understanding of professional protocols. It also builds trust in you and enhances your credibility among your organization and its employees.

Slang is sloppy...precision preferred

Avoid slinging slang unless you are a short-order cook. Slang is a shortcut that suggests excessive informality and lack of appreciation for the workplace setting and expectations. The presumption of others: if you're sloppy in language, you're sloppy in other areas. Know when to use slang (we recommend outside of work) and when to use proper English.

Precision

- **Well vs. Good.**

Those who speak well know to use well instead of good when describing performance. When you perform admirably, you are performing well, not good. You don't do things good. You do them well. "Doing good" is a phrase reserved for the benefits of philanthropy, charity or volunteerism.

- **More than vs. over:** Over is a preposition and generally refers

to spatial relationships: "The plane flew over Sacramento." Use more than when giving data: "Silicon Valley has more than 10,000 programming jobs."

- Degrees are important. So is understanding **the degree** to which you are in favor or opposed to something. Don't get a third-degree burn! When you tell people you are 360° opposed to something, they won't hire you since you obviously failed geometry. 180° denotes complete opposition. Once you've come 360° you've come full circle and are back where you started from.
- Sadly, very unique isn't. **Unique**, by definition, means one of a kind, unparalleled, without peer. Adding very in front of unique is as meaningless as doing something 110%, 115% or 150%.
- Irregardless. There is no such word. Regardless of what you've heard, the correct word is "**regardless**."

Pronunciation

Here are some pronouncements on pronunciation. How well do you pronounce the words you use? Here are the [50 most commonly mispronounced words](#) in the English language. Score yourself for accuracy. Here are a few of the ones we hear mangled regularly in my meetings. The correct words are in parentheses:

- Supposably (supposedly)
- Upmost (utmost)
- Jewlery (jewelry)
- Orientated (oriented)
- Nucular (nuclear)
- Perscription (prescription)

Sadly, just because you heard it from the mouth of a Podcaster or in a YouTube video gone viral doesn't mean that it's correct.

Why It Matters

Speaking English well is important for a number of reasons:

1. It is a sign of your professionalism, and it suggests you will adhere to other standards of good business such as honesty, fairness and service.
2. Being well spoken separates you from your competitors, who by and large don't speak as well.

3. When you speak well, the world respects you and wants to conduct business with you.

Next Steps

To improve your grammar and pronunciation, you can:

- Listen to great orators, national newscasters and spoken word versions of books.
- Join a local [Toastmasters club](#) to receive practice and coaching in prepared and impromptu speaking situations. Bonus: it will boost your vocabulary as well as confidence.
- Use online grammar-checkers for scripted remarks you intend to deliver orally.
- Read books on good writing and powerful public speaking.
- Ask co-workers to proof-read and edit your remarks for grammar, redundancy and other pitfalls that weaken our spoken and written words.

Seize the English Edge

Whether you're an internal job candidate, rising professional or civic leader, you will be judged by the language you use...or misuse. Seize the English edge and get the position, raise or results you desire. And remember, people are always listening.



The Consulting Team offers numerous classes where attention to language, speech, grammar and communication are addressed in detail.

We teach classes on [Critical Conversations](#).

Our classes on [Building Credibility](#) and [Enhancing Trust through Communicating with Tact and Professionalism](#) both address use of proper language to build or repair trust and strengthen workplace relationships.

Our [Supervisory 101 Back-to-Basics training](#) also addresses effective spoken word communication.

Are you or your employees seeking [presentation and influence training](#) and [presentation coaching](#)? We can help.

We include "magic words" in our [Customer Service](#) Training and training on effective apologies and recoveries.

Our [Thinking On Your Feet](#) class helps attendees polish their off-the-cuff speaking to be more confident, credible and compelling.

In our half- and full-day writing classes we help professionals compose, write, edit, proofread, publish and deliver reports, memos, letters, emails and other documents to generate results. Read about them [here](#).

[Download a PDF file with a service overview](#) of our coaching, consulting, facilitation and training services.

We look forward to partnering with you to foster workplace success.



Contact The Consulting Team to learn more about training, coaching, consulting assistance and also one-to-one training for leaders and employees.

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